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A Legacy of Potatoes

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A Legacy of Potatoes

Cole Castleberry

Not all of us come from royalty. Our forbearing backgrounds which help each one of us, especially in this country, define who we are, may not always have a polished past related to historical significance. Who we are and where we come from, however, is something that sticks with us forever. It is something that no one can take away. We must understand that the steps taken by those who came directly before us are a part of who we are. This may sound a bit deep to describe a simple recipe used by a few Welsh farmers trying their hand at farming. It is a recipe, however, that made its way through the ages and saw the best and worst of a community since the mid 1850s. It is a piece of who I am and how we got here today. Although my family's background may be cliché and a story unappreciated by many, it is, however, my history.

My ancestors came from Wales and England in 1856. They made their way out west following the vast hordes of Mormon Pioneers in hopes of finding a new home. They were among the first to settle just outside of Spanish Fork. It was there that these stone masons and bakers by trade readjusted their sights to a new way of living consisting of farming. It was a hard life, but they managed to run a farm consisting of corn and over 100 head of cattle. It is here that the recipe of Canyon Fried Potatoes took heed. Now, my Celtic ancestry knows better than just about anyone that potatoes have been cooked, baked, boiled, fried, simmered, sizzled, and sautéed in every conceivable way for hundreds of years. So this recipe of Canyon Fried Potatoes may not be anything unique because odds are millions of Irishman had been preparing potatoes this same way for centuries. This is simply a recipe my family lived off of since they took up the rugged life of farming.

During the summer, these Welsh immigrants took their cattle into Spanish Fork Canyon to graze until Fall. It was there that they understood the importance of taking preservable food for weeks at a time while looking after the cattle. Throughout the years, they slowly

developed a simple recipe of adding salted pork to potatoes baked into a Dutch oven that was hearty and low maintenance. This recipe has been used and has changed very little since their first drives up the canyon. To this day, my family enjoys this nostalgic meal with memories encompassing the good Ol' times of working with my grandpa and uncles on the same plot of land that has been utilized for over 150 years.